

## MASTERING THE SIX STAGES OF LIFECYCLE MARKETING



Krista Forsberg, Keller Williams Realty

**L**ifecycle marketing is a best practice that many talk about, but few implement. For some insight, we sat down with Krista Forsberg, Realtor® at Keller Williams Realty in Edina. As a former marketing executive with over a decade of corporate brand-building experience, she is well versed in guiding consumers from casual curiosity to clients who sign on the dotted line, make the purchase, and become dedicated advocates for her business.

“Lifecycle marketing begins with understanding where your client is in the purchase or sales process and providing the information they need to go from prospect to satisfied client,” Forsberg said. “To get there, you need a carefully crafted marketing plan that touches your clients with the right communication at every stage of the process, from first contact to contract, purchase, closing and beyond.”

Mapping that process and each of its stages is where your lifecycle marketing plan begins.

### 1. Awareness

Awareness begins when potential clients connect your name, face and business with something they need right now or in the future. Whether they encounter you online on Facebook or offline at the supermarket, your messaging should showcase your expertise, build confidence, and convey a strong sense of your personality and brand.

Today’s Realtors® have more communication channels to choose from than ever before. From mailings to landing

pages, social media, and digital retargeting, the choices can be overwhelming. Where should you invest your time and money?

Forsberg advises experimenting with a mix of tried-and-true methods like networking groups (if only virtually during the pandemic), plus a variety of digital channels such as Facebook, Instagram, and a website.

“Find the channels that fit your communication style and measure the results. Pick the top three or four and put your money there,” Forsberg said.

Whatever you do, follow through. Whether you invest in leads from Zillow, take names and emails at open houses, or generate responses online, winning business requires staying in touch and transforming awareness into engagement.

### 2. Engagement

Now it’s time to nurture relationships from all those leads you gathered with your awareness efforts. Again, Forsberg advises utilizing channels that best suit your unique communication style. Some suggestions include:

- Sending out a bi-weekly newsletter updating potential clients about market trends
- Running down your email list from A to Z and connect with personal notes
- Checking in with those on-the-fence homebuyers at your networking group

Whatever you do, Forsberg says, keep the communication flowing. Demonstrate your expertise of the local housing market, pricing strategy, pre-sale home improvement and staging—all the elements that will make you their inevitable agent of choice.

“You’re going to be involved in one of the largest sales or purchases that most people will make in their lifetime. Because it is their home, it is very personal. Depending on the situation, it can be very exciting, very scary or sad. So,

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you have to create that rich connection, so they trust you,” Forsberg said.

### 3. Evaluation

Evaluation is the hot zone; the stage where potential clients are ready to move forward. Forsberg stresses that if you’re on their short list, it’s critical to be the first one they contact because many consumers interview only one agent before signing a representation contract.

You can stack the deck in your favor by being fully prepared when you sit down for that critical face-to-face meeting. That means having a dialed-in process for providing information about your services, including testimonials, and answering their questions.

Once you clinch the deal, it’s important to establish expectations for the purchase process:

- What are your client’s preferred methods of communication?
- Define expectations and boundaries about responses to issues and queries
- Outline critical decision points in the sales or purchase

“Going over these points sets everyone up for a successful transaction. So, by the time you’re in the midst of the purchase process, you and the client are functioning as a team,” Forsberg said.

One last expectation to set looks beyond the purchase—referrals.

“I tell my clients, part of the reason I work so hard for them is that when this transaction is over, I want them to feel good about referring me to people,” said Forsberg. “By then, they know I have exceeded their expectations in every way, so they genuinely want to advocate for me.”

### 4. Purchase

This is where the process you set in place during the evaluation comes into play. Now, as showings are lined

up, offers made, and inspections juggled, you deliver on promises and prove your worth.

“It’s a crazy time, but the hard work you do here helps establish a productive post-purchase relationship that generates referrals and repeat business.” Forsberg said.



A gift from Krista on the anniversary of a client’s home purchase.

### 5. Post Purchase

The transaction might be over, but your relationship with the client is just beginning.

“Closing day isn’t the end. I keep checking in to make sure everything is okay,” said Forsberg. “I schedule follow ups with closed clients over the next year.”

Forsberg collects those all-important referrals while the experience is still top of the client’s mind. After that, periodic phone or email exchanges let her keep demonstrating her value. From painters to plumbers and furnace repair, Forsberg constantly connects clients to her network of vetted professionals.

“After a while, they see you as more than someone who does housing transactions. You become a trusted advisor and friend,” she observed.

Forsberg carefully segments her database of post-purchase contacts, noting opportunities to stay in front of them with cards for holidays, birthdays, anniversaries and other life events. Additionally, she hosts annual client-appreciation events. On more than one occasion, events like these have led to referrals and even repeat business.

### 6. Advocacy

Advocacy is the word-of-mouth promotion that loyal clients provide for your business. If you’ve done your due diligence at every stage of the lifecycle, it arises naturally and organically.

“Chances are, at any given time someone in your network of former clients knows one or two people who are buying or selling a home,” said Forsberg. “When they talk with those friends, your name should naturally come to mind. That kind of advocacy is the pay-off for the hard work and strategic communication you’ve made at every stage of the process.”